UNITED NATIONS

SECRETARIAT

ST

Distribution
GENERAL

ST/ECLA/CI/4*
29 September 1950

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IMMIGRATION
WORKING COMMITTEE AT THE SECRETARIAT LEVEL

First Meeting
Santiago, Chile

Note on Item (b) of the Terms of Reference

1. The Executive Secretary has despatched a formal letter (ST/ECLA/C.1/4/Add.1) to all of the Latin American Governments, with copies for information to the other Member Governments. This letter enquires whether the Committee can assist the Government on the matters covered by Item (b) of its terms of reference. This official approach should be followed up by informal contacts.

2. Where Governments are desirous of consulting with the Committee it may be necessary for the Committee to meet in the country concerned. The Committee's procedure will need to be flexible and to vary according to whether the case falls under (1), (2) or (3) of (b) of the terms of reference. In some cases the Government will have plans which exist or are nearing completion; in other cases the Committee's advice may be required on the seeking of suitable projects. It may be desirable to ask Governments which request assistance under (b) (2) and (3) to supply the Committee with particulars of:

(a) current economic projects, capable of absorbing immigrants, which cannot be realised by reason of difficulties which are beyond the resources of the countries themselves to overcome;

* Reproduced, with minor editorial changes, from the original issued in Santiago, Chile.

(b) possible fields for additional projects, for the examination of which outside help would be necessary;

(c) past projects which were sound but which failed to materialize owing to lack of necessary technical or financial resources.

3. It is obvious that in addition to the Committee's enquiries, which may of necessity be only of a general character and related to "feasability", it may be desirable for more detailed expert enquiries to be made by means of the technical assistance available at the Headquarters of the United Nations and the Specialised Agencies. Where technical assistance is required it will be necessary to follow the normal procedure under which the application is made by the Government concerned. It will, however, be desirable, where the Government is agreeable, for the Committee to continue to interest itself in the plan or project.

4. The precise procedure would depend upon the nature of the plan or project and the wishes of the Government concerned. But one of the most important potentialities of the Committee might well be the technical assistance which it would render, on request after the stage of detailed expert inquiry, in the working out and operation of the project. The Committee should endeavour to maintain its interest in the plan or project from beginning to end, calling upon further resources through the medium of the technical assistance funds at the various stages of the development and operation of the project.

5. A model type of procedure, where it could be adopted, might be as follows. A certain country has, for example, an under-developed area which might be developed both agriculturally and also in respect of light industries

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given the requisite capital resources, skilled manpower and other means of production. The country requests the Executive Secretary for the Committee's advice and the Committee proceeds to the country's capital. The Committee makes its own examination to decide whether the scheme appears to be feasible and likely to obtain the requisite outside assistance. Where the Committee can only give its view after more detailed expert enquiry and it has exhausted the local possibilities of obtaining such expert advice, it will suggest that the Government apply for a visit by technical experts under the Technical Assistance Scheme. Simultaneously with the Government making that request, the Committee would seek through the appropriate channels the support of United Nations Headquarters and the Headquarters of the various specialized agencies for the granting of the requisite technical assistance. The technical assistance experts would, before making their detailed enquiries, meet with the Government and with the Committee and discuss the scheme generally. The Committee would keep in contact with the detailed enquiries and meet on their completion with the various experts concerned. The report of the experts would be submitted to the Government through the approved technical assistance channels, but both the Committee and the experts would have had the advantage of informal consultations. Assuming that the experts reported favourably to the Government, the next steps would be first the obtaining of the necessary means for carrying out the project, such as finance, equipment, suitable labour and immigrants, and later the successful administration of the project after its commencement. These will be a matter on which the Committee should be prepared to give assistance in accordance with the terms of reference to Governments upon request.

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6. The value of the Committee's work will depend upon the extent to which it becomes a useful instrument to Governments and known as such. Migration and settlement projects are full of difficulties. To the range of problems involved in ordinary development is added the complexity of the movement settlement and assimilation of individual people. The Committee should initially seek to aid Governments to develop plans and projects which are connected with the current growth and current possibilities of the economies of interested countries.

7. It is not possible to envisage what requests will be received from particular Governments, but some material is being collected regarding the most fruitful possible fields for the Committee's work and will be avialable to the Committee when it meets.